

Remarks by General (Dr.) Vijay Kumar Singh, Minister of State for External Affairs of India at the 10th ASEM Summit on October 16, 2014 in Milan, Italy

Plenary Session II: Europe-Asia Partnership in Addressing Global Matters in an Inter-Connected World.

Your Excellency Mr. Herman Van Rompuy, President of the European Council and Chairman of the 10th ASEM Summit,

Your Excellency Mr Jose Manuel Barosso, President of the European Commission

Your Excellency Mr. Matteo Renzi, Prime Minister of Italy,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I bring to you warm greetings and good wishes from Prime Minister Narendra Modi for a successful ASEM10. The new Government in India has demonstrated strong credentials in support of a world-view that acknowledges the collective benefit from ***strong and effective multilateralism***. This is part of India's ancient wisdom, its philosophical foundations and our current practice.

I extend India's ***welcome to Croatia and Kazakhstan*** as new members in ASEM. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our host Italy for their welcome and generous hospitality and the excellent arrangements for ASEM10.

Excellencies, as a first priority in addressing global matters, ***ASEM needs to respond to the aspirations of people*** in Asia and Europe. It is also our belief that until the people in ASEM countries can view each other as potential partners, the forum will not achieve its real potential. ***ASEM's edge*** in membership, capacity, economic reach, intellectual depth, strategic expertise and political leadership ***must reflect in its ambition***. The ***tools*** for this need to be ***capacity building and transfer of best practices and technologies, use of science and innovation as also education and skills development***. If members can come together at relatively comparable levels of systems, economic growth and development, there will be fewer occasions for differences of perspective and approach and better capacities for partnership.

The move in recent times towards ***tangible cooperation in ASEM is a step in this direction***. India would like to urge that it be the norm for the Chair of any Foreign Ministers Meeting or Summit to report on progress under tangible cooperation.

For our two Continents to have a robust political-security and economic environment, the ***partnership between Europe and Asia must first*** effectively combat ***international terrorism***, the interconnections between terror networks and the globalization of their support structure, which is threatening the security and

stability of countries across regions. We urge ASEM support to an ***urgent adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism***, proposed by India at the UN since 1996.

Excellencies, if we are to truly bridge Asia and Europe, connectivity in ASEM should not only be geographic but also mean ***connectivity of institutions, systems and people-to-people*** linkages. This will add to capacities for partnership to address global issues. Easing of travel norms for business, education and tourism between member countries would be a step in sync with global trends. Today, Europe is seen as a fortress in Asia; tomorrow it could be the same for Europeans travelling to Asia. Before that happens, let us ease business travel to begin with and find the right institutions to do so.

One of the ***strongest resources in Asia and Europe is human resource***. We all also know of the ***historical links between outstanding minds*** in Europe and Asia. We need to ***now look at transforming these in scale and reach to target the youth*** across the two Continents by establishing linkages between institutions of excellence and higher learning as well as vocational education and skills training.

An ***integrated post-2015 Development Agenda*** must address the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental – in a ***balanced, inclusive and people-oriented*** manner. We would urge that ***Multilateral Development Banks*** be encouraged to support efforts by the Asia-Europe partnership in ASEM to catalyze investment and global growth.

Growth-enhancing policies undertaken by European countries together with Asia's resilience; greater involvement of the ***private sector, especially SMEs***; an open, transparent, and a ***rules-based trading system*** which takes into account all Ministerial Decisions taken in Bali, including the ***Ministerial Decision on public stockholding for food security*** are important also for the ASEM agenda. Technical cooperation on ***efficient use of natural resources***, notably food, water, energy; addressing climate change related issues keeping in mind the principles of ***equity, common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR) and respective capabilities***; an ***increase in infrastructure investment*** as an engine of growth and job creation; and ***bringing in youth and women*** into this calculation will help increase our trade and growth prospects and also ***offset the rising level of geopolitical risks***.

Excellencies, India has committed to ten specific initiatives as part of this endeavor, which have been circulated to your delegations. We look forward to ASEM members joining these initiatives as co-sponsors, without financial obligation. A Roundtable on ***“Energy Efficiency in Green Buildings”*** has been held on September 5, 2014 in Hyderabad. We look forward to ASEM participation at the Roundtable on ***“Cooperation for Industrial R&D and Technology Alliances in Life Sciences, Pharmaceuticals, Bio-technology and Medical Devices”*** on November

20, 2014 in Delhi NCR as part of **KNOWLEDGEXPO 2014**. The Roundtable on **‘Innovations in Technologies for Disaster Rescue Efforts’** will be held back-to-back with a meeting to inaugurate the *Virtual Knowledge Portal (VKP)* being set up under the East Asia Summit and a meeting of the *24x7 POCs of the EAS countries* on December 4-5, 2014 in New Delhi. The Roundtable on **“Towards Efficient and Sustainable Water Management Through Partnership Amongst ASEM Countries”** would be held in New Delhi on February 27, 2015. We look forward to a partnership between Europe and Asia on the ASEM Roundtable on **“Non-Invasive Diagnostic Technologies for Diabetes and Treatment of Diabetes as a Lifestyle Disease”** on April 8, 2015 in New Delhi. The Foreign Service Institute in New Delhi will host a **“Diplomacy and Indian foreign policy”** capsule for one diplomat at the level of First Secretary from each of the ASEM members from March 9-13, 2015. We will host a **Meeting of Young CEOs in ASEM** in 2016. We look forward to co-sponsors for the Workshop on **“Conservation Techniques & Instruments”** on October 20-21, 2016 in New Delhi, hosted by INTACH (Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage). The Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) will approach its counterparts in ASEM countries for an **“Artist in Residence”** programme across the two Continents. We would also plan a tour by **select Indian cultural artists of excellence to different ASEM countries** for **“India Evenings”** as part of the cultural extravaganza during the 20th Anniversary celebrations in 2016. India would be hosting the **11th Meeting of the ASEM Customs Director-Generals/Commissioners** in October 2015. The Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) will host, together with ASEF, the **“Asia Europe Network of Urban Heritage for Sustainable Creative Economies”** from October 25-27, 2014. We are also working with ASEF to organize a project on **“Sustainable Urbanisation in Heritage Cities”** in 2015 in India.

Thank you.